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THE PIONEER PREACHER IN ILLINOIS.

CONTRIBUTED BY J. O. CUNNINGHAM.

The following extracts from an auto-biography written by Rev. Arthur Bradshaw, a pioneer preacher of Illinois for many years, will be read with interest, as it well shows some of the difficulties encountered by those who in the early days sought to minister to the pioneers in spiritual matters:

My first appointment (Conference of 1836 at Rushville, Ills.) was on the Wabash circuit, where I was raised and where I then lived. Rev. William Taylor was preacher in charge.

My second appointment (Conference of 1837 at Jacksonville, Ills.) was Golconda, Pope county, Illinois, on the Ohio river, a rough country and short grub. I have ridden fourteen miles on a hot summer morning, preached at eleven o'clock, led class and then helped beat meal to get bread for dinner. Traveled several miles through cypress swamps and preached again at night. I received this year, all told, furnishing my own house and traveling expenses, sixty-two dollars and fifty cents.

My next appointment (Conference of 1838 at Upper Alton, Ills.) was back to the old Wabash circuit, where twenty-seven appointments were to be filled every four weeks. Where there was a society we had class after preaching. I received one hundred dollars salary and furnished my own parsonage.

My next appointment (Conference of 1839 at Bloomington, Ills.) was Urbana Mission. This caused a move of one hundred and fifty miles. We were compelled to move in an ox wagon and camp out about half the nights

and take the weather as it came; so we had rain, mud and storm. When we arrived at Urbana our goods were all wet, a fierce wind blowing from the northwest and no empty house in town. We took up lodging for a few days with Simon Motes, in his cabin in the north part of the village. The little society and friends had put up the body of a hewed log cabin with rafters, but no roof, floor or chimney. I organized a society four miles north of Urbana, at Esquire Rhoades'; another east of Rhoades' three miles, at the house of John Gilliland; another down east of Urbana ten miles, at Widow Bartley's, and another still east of that on the road leading to Danville, at Poagues, then to Homer.

My first visit to Homer was on Sunday morning, hunting a place to preach; but there was neither hall, school-house, church nor empty house, so the prospect was gloomy. At last a gentleman remarked: "Do you see that little white house in the north part of the village?" I said, "Yes." "Well," said he, "they have dances there and may be you might get in there." So I went and stated my business. "Well," said the Doctor (Stevens), "We have dances twice a week here. I don't know how that would work. What do you think of it, wife?" "Well," said she, "I don't know." I said, "You don't dance on Sabbath?" "No," said the Doctor. "Well," said I, "let me preach on Sunday; we'll have no friction." So they consented. Before the year was out the doctor and his wife professed religion and joined the Methodist Church, and we organized a society. I never knew what became of those dancers.

I then organized a church in Sidney. I went from Urbana to Sadorus' Grove, fifteen miles, without a house to stop at, making it a cold ride in bad weather.

Nine miles below, or south of Sadorus, we had a small society at John Haines'. Five miles below, on the Okaw, was where John Brian lived in a small cabin. Here we organized a society. Continuing down the river five miles, we came to old Father West's. Here we organized a society. Still continuing down the river, we came to,

Flat Branch, where we organized another society in the cabin of John and Sarah Poorman. We were now forty miles from Urbana. This entire round was made every three weeks.

In 1840 we put up the frame of a small church, 30x40, in Urbana and enclosed it, and in the fall, as I was leaving for my next appointment, I was sued for the shingles that went on the church.

It was at a campmeeting, one and one-half miles east of Urbana, that Jake Heater, said to be the bully of the county, got under strong convictions. He was told to go to the altar and pray and he'd feel better. So Jake went and kneeled down, and his first prayer was: "Oh, Lord, God, rim-rack and center shake the devil's kingdom."

My next appointment (Conference of 1840 at Springfield, Ills.) was at Decatur. After one year spent there I was returned (Conference of 1841 at Jacksonville, Ills.) to Urbana circuit, with some new appointments added, to-wit: Wallace's Tavern, not far from where Arcola now stands; Greasy Point, Oakland (called also Pinhook), thence up to Snowden Sargent's; then north to Rev. S. Lowe, near where Newman now stands; then west to New Albany, now Camargo.

The year I was on Decatur circuit I had no horse. I told William Brian of the matter, remarking that I would be obliged to travel on foot or quit, and asked him what I should do. That noble hearted man said: "I have one horse on my farm that is fit for use; you take that horse and stick to your circuit. I have four yoke of oxen. The boys and I can raise a crop with them. We can't do without the gospel."

During my first winter on the Urbana circuit I had no overcoat, and had some very long, cold rides to make. This was more than Uncle Billy could stand. So one day he said: "Anna (that was his wife's name), where is that overcoat I had made in Ohio, out of navy blue broadcloth?" Anna pulled a box from under the bed and remarked that it was in there. Mr. Brian said to me, "Put it on." So I put it on and he said: "It's a perfect fit."

You take that overcoat and wear it out, and I'll wear my wamus." I wore that coat six years, and then my wife made a splendid suit out of it for our little boy. In those days goods were cheap, and yet it cost about thirty-five dollars.

During my second year on this circuit Brother Brian said to me one day in harvest: "Do you know how to harvest?" I said I did. "Well," he replied, "I have an oats field, and you may have all that you can cut and put up in one day." I said: "May the boys help me?" He said: "Yes, I don't care." So at it we went, and at night we had four acres in the shock. I got eighty bushels of oats for my day's work. Uncle Billy said that if people would they could support a preacher, money or no money. He often gave the preacher a cow when money was scarce. Do you blame me when I say that I love the name of William Brian? And I hope to meet Anna and him where the tree of life is blooming. Amen.

From Urbana I went to Georgetown, and had a good time, with some grand campmeetings. I staid here two years and went back to old Wabash circuit for one year. I then went to Mt. Vernon circuit, where I remained two years, during which time we had about four hundred conversions and accessions to the church.

I next went to Danville circuit, Rev. J. C. Baker, junior. We had grand revivals—about two hundred accessions. Then to old Sangamon circuit, where old Peter Cartwright lived and died. I then went to Carlinville one year, after which I located for one year.

When I rejoined conference (Conference of 1853) I was appointed to Danville district for two years. I then superannuated and lived in Urbana two years, when (Conference of 1857 at Decatur, Ills.) I went to Camargo circuit, where I remained two years and had revivals at each society except Scattering Fork, receiving on probation about three hundred probationers.